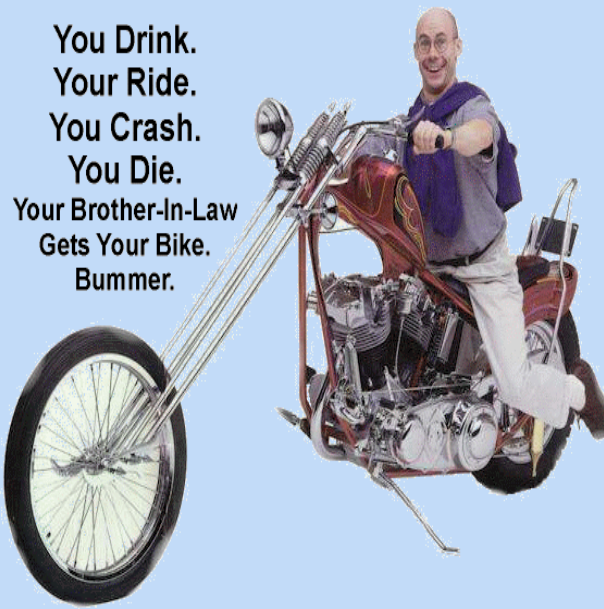


SHOP SAFETY

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¶ Working on motorcycles can be dangerous, but it doesn't have to be. Common sense can go a long way to turn a major problem into a minor one.

Minor cuts, if left untreated, can easily become infected and end up costing you a finger. Sandy, the shop foreman of an auto shop I once worked at, told the story of once almost loosing a finger to a very minor cut. It got infected and puffed up like a balloon. Doctors had to cut it open and drain everything out... Yuck! So after he told me this story, I took his advice and stopped work, washed my newly cut finger off, and put some disinfectant and a Band-Aid on it.

This is what I do when I get a cut. Immediately wash with soap and water. Then rinse it with a 3% solution of Hydrogen-Peroxide. Then put on some antiseptic cream and a Band-Aid. If you do this immediately, it usually does not hurt much. If you wait a while to do it, it WILL hurt. At night I leave the Band-Aid off so the wound will dry. If it gets a bit infected I squeeze the infected part with my fingers as hard as I can stand it. This sounds strange and it hurts like everything, but it seems to get rid of infected liquid in the wound and helps it heal. Put on more antiseptic cream. If it still stays infected, soak in a mixture of hot water and Epson salt. Make the water as hot as you can stand it. Again, more antiseptic cream. If it STILL stays infected, a trip to the Doctor is indicated.

Burns come, basically, in three flavors. First degree, like a sunburn. Second degree, which produces a blister, and third degree, which is a burn that goes deep, deep into the skin. A real crispy critter. Most of your burns will, hopefully, be first and second degree. Put Ice on them as soon as you can. This cuts the pain and helps keep the blisters small. With a third degree burn, you need to see a Doctor. A burn this bad may require a skin graft.

It's a good idea to keep a First Kit in your tool kit AND to use it. Even a minor cut or burn can really slow you down if you get it infected.

Other things you can include in your tool kit is baking soda, water, and a good working Fire Extinguisher.

If you get battery acid on you, the baking soda will neutralize it. Water will also wash acid off your warm, quivering, flesh. If you get acid on you and do nothing, the acid will give you a **VERY** bad chemical burn. If you have water and baking soda the problem, and the pain, disappears.

You will be working a lot with gasoline. Any spark, including static electricity will set it off. Plugging and unplugging electrical connections and performing electric starter tests can produce big sparks. If you light yourself off, things can be very painful indeed. A cheap fire extinguisher cure this problem and eliminates pain!

Engine backfires can also set a motorcycle air box, say like on a Honda Gold Wing, on fire. You might find that you can almost blow out the flames, but not quite. You might find that after ten or so really big puffs of air that you are hyperventilating and getting light headed and that you are wondering whether you can get to the fire extinguisher and back before your customers \$4000.00 lead wing melts. You might, you might, yes, you might ! So you might want to put that fire extinguisher **REAL** close to the work at hand next time. Ah... trust me on this... You really **NEED** a good fire extinguisher and you **NEED** it close at hand!

Safety glasses will help keep inappropriate material out of your eyes. This you will find is a very good thing!

Yes, it's just a test ride around the block, but what if the countershaft sprocket comes off and locks up the rear wheel? Wear a helmet, leathers, gloves... just in case.

Put all oily rags and paper in a metal container and keep a lid on it. This will prevent spontaneous combustion.

Keep all gasoline in air tight containers which are made specifically for gasoline. This may seem simple, but far too many people are not scared of gasoline. I am terrified of the stuff. One cup of gasoline has the explosive power of two sticks of dynamite. If you leave a pan of it out uncovered the fumes can be ignited by any spark and you will not believe the fire it will start until you see it! Special gasoline containers made with steel or thick, gas proof, plastic, are needed. No milk jugs need apply!

Clean your parts with solvent and **NOT** with gasoline.

Lastly, start thinking about what you are doing. If you are really pushing hard on that screw driver, and it slips off the screw, where will it go ? Into the work bench, or into you hand? When you really pull on that wrench and it slips off the bolt. Where will your knuckles go? Into something hard and sharp? Try to think ahead. Pain hurts, so avoid it.

One more thing. Being a Macho Man or Women will **NOT** stop a piece of wire, from the wire brush wheel on your bench grinder, from ramming into your eye. Be a pansy, wear safety glasses, helmets, gloves, and use safety equipment.

Like I always say,

**"If you don't, It's OK... I don't care,
it's not my body, and it won't HURT me at all!"**

2015 UPDATE

**Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father,
and attend to know understanding.
For I give you good doctrine,
forsake ye not my law.
Proverbs 4:1-2**

Well, maybe not so much because I'm not really changing anything. I got an E-mail the other day from a nice gentleman who told me I was all wrong and that I needed a link to the Mayo Clinic. Hydrogen-Peroxide is bad and will damage you. Ice on a 2nd degree burn will give you frost bite. He even offered to re-write the page correcting all the, umm, errors. I thanked him and turned him down. He was TOTALLY wrong on everything.

I have been a motorcycle mechanic for over Forty years. EVERYTHING I tell you comes from a lot of experience. Story time.

I first learned about Hydrogen-Peroxide from Medics in the army. In 1973 I was a Paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne and I was working as a lowly generator operator at a training camp called Recondo school. Recondo School taught patrolling, ambushes and generally how to kill people. It is the army you know, that is what we do.

My Generators provided power for the entire camp. We were way out in the field and beyond the power lines. My Generators need gasoline and we brought it out to the camp in 500 gallon, rubber, fuel bladders. These fuel bladders, when empty weighed around 300 to 400 pounds. Usually, I got students to load the empty bladders on to a 2 1/2 ton truck. 50 young paratroopers can easily pick up a 300 pound fuel bladder. The problem was that we were between classes and there were only myself and two other troopers to pick up that bladder and that was not easy. So I hooked the bladder to a 1/2" steel cable, ran the cable up and over a big tree branch and to the bumper hitch of a 2 1/2 ton truck. Pull the bladder off the ground about three feet, back another 2 1/2 ton truck up to it and push the fuel bladder onto the truck. What could possibly go wrong?

Well, we pulled the bladder off the ground, backed up the truck and tried to push it onto the truck bed. Naturally, it did not want to go in so I climbed up on to the truck bed and tried to pull the bladder into the truck. Being smart I grabbed the steel cable just above where it attached to the fuel bladder and a good two feet below the tree branch.

I told the driver with the cable to pull forward a foot. My driver thought I was talking to him and drove off. I fell off the back of the truck and still holding onto the cable jumped onto the fuel bladder like a squirrel running up a tree. At the same time the driver with the cable pulled forward two feet and firmly caught my hand between the cable and the tree.

OK, I climb up on the branch and there I sat. 2 1/2 ton truck on one side and a 300 pound fuel bladder on the other and the cable between the two slowly cutting my four fingers off with the branch as the cutting board. What fun! I'm yelling "Stop, Stop, Stop" at the top of my lungs so everyone stops and comes around and look at me. Then everyone starts laughing at me. Perhaps I looked comical, perched on a branch while a cable saws my fingers off.

I must confess I lost it. I was screaming and yelling and using very bad language. Then our Lieutenant came up to find out what all the noise was about. He looked, he saw, and then he laughed too. I called him

and then every dirty name I could think of and then I called their mothers and wives and daughters and grandmothers and great grandmothers and I was working my way back up their combined family trees and I very discreetly said they all wore army boots. Now a private is not supposed to say that to an officer but I was slowly LOOSING MY FINGERS. 4

Then the Lieutenant stopped laughing, gave, a few orders and POP! I was free. I jumped down and took a good look at my fingers. What a mess. I thought I could see the white bone but the Medics told me later that what I saw was the ligaments going down each finger.

Now the Medics took over and poured Hydrogen-Peroxide all over the wound, clipped all the chunks of meat off and cleaned all the dirt out with a stiff bristled brush. All the while pouring Hydrogen-Peroxide over everything. They then put on lots of stuff called Bacitracin (The stuff that is used in today's Neosporin) and bandaged me up. It did not hurt at all because the wound was so fresh.

I was amazed at how fast the wound healed. It absolutely sold me on using Hydrogen-Peroxide to clean a wound and Bacitracin to help it heal. To say that this is bad? Well, you have left the path of wisdom. Can a Doctor do better? I would hope so. My Doctor charges \$180 for a fifteen minute visit. I pay him cash so he gives me a discount of \$30. Hydrogen-Peroxide costs two dollars a bottle and a tube of Neosporin about five dollars. If you think the stuff the Doc uses for a minor wound is worth paying \$140 bucks extra then go for it. Just remember he gives the same guarantee I do which is none at all!

Same thing with ice for a second degree burn and let me tell you, I have had a lot of burns. Hot engines and exhaust pipes can really light you up. The Medicos keep changing their minds on ice for burns.

When I was in the Boy Scouts (early 1960s) I burned my hand on a hot griddle. The medical wisdom of the time said ice was bad so they just put some burn ointment on, Butesin Picrate I believe, and WOW did it hurt and I got a gigantic blister. Then all the Medicos said use ice and when everyone did the pain and the big blisters went away. Now ice has lost favor again. Why I don't know. I just know ice works.

I usually wrap the ice cube in a paper towel so I can hold on to it easily. Now just keep the ice on the burn till it stops hurting. If you remove the ice the pain will start again. Keep the ice on the burn until it stops hurting when you remove the ice, which will be about two hours or so. Now I just don't think there is anything better because cold from the ice restricts the blood vessels and stops a big blister from forming. I do not think any cream can do that. But if you do, get out another \$150 bucks and have at it. Just don't try to take away my ice.

Same thing with all the things I tell you. I could go on and on. It all comes from lots and lots of personal experience and all of it comes with the exact same guarantee every Hospital and Doctor in our great nation gives. Which is none at all!

Like I always say,

**"If you don't, It's OK... I don't care,
it's not my body, and it won't HURT me at all!"**

**How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?
and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?**

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